

CHEROKEE COUNTY

Honorable Sheri W. Carver

Cherokee County Courthouse
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Centre, AL 35960
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Georgia Hale
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Lori Lumsden
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Vista Volunteer: Karen Y. Howell

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cherokee County families and agencies will have optimal knowledge and access to available services.
2. Family Resource Center
3. Child Safety

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Mental Health services for children and youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Coordinate with CED Mental Health to provide mental health services for children and youth in Cherokee County
- Educate the public and community leaders about the lack of mental health services for children and youth in Cherokee County
- Work with community leaders who are willing to increase the mental health services for children and youth in Cherokee County

Medicaid Dentist

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Communicate the need for a Medicaid Dentist in Cherokee County to the Medicaid office in Montgomery. Ms. Tina Edwards, (334) 242-5000, is the contact person there.
- Identify any dentists in the area who accept Medicaid and will be willing to establish a satellite office in Centre
- Identify any rural incentives currently being offered to dentist. Educate prospective dentists about the incentives and the potential for growth in Cherokee County. Prospects will be identified through dental schools located within the state of Alabama

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Family Resource Center

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with writing grants and seeking funding for the resource center.
- Work with community leaders to determine funding opportunities for Executive Director position.
- Work with community leaders to determine availability of a facility to be used for the resource center at no or low-cost until the center is established

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with writing grants to fund teen pregnancy prevention programs.
- Plan and implement teen pregnancy prevention programs in all schools in Cherokee County (grades 9-12).
- Plan and implement teen pregnancy prevention programs in all schools in Cherokee County (grades 6-7).

Child Safety

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with writing grants to fund school based substance abuse prevention programs for all schools in Cherokee County
- Work to establish court mandated substance abuse prevention programs and parenting classes for parents
- Work with local Department of Human Resources to increase referrals of parenting classes that are tied to educating parents in relation to substance abuse.

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

After School and Summer programs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with writing grants for funding after school and summer programs
- Plan and implement after school and summer programs in each school in Cherokee County

School Safety

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with seeking funding for security cameras in every school in Cherokee County, security cameras for parking lots, school buses, and playgrounds.

After School Tutoring/Mentoring

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop and require after school tutoring for all students whose grades fall below average. (51.1% of students who use illicit drugs say they never make good grades. 32.1% of students who use illicit drugs say they seldom make good grades. Source 2005 PRIDE Survey- Cherokee County)
- Require after school community involvement for students who get into trouble. Work with local nonprofit organizations to arrange volunteer opportunities for these students. (17.1% of students who use illicit drugs say they never take part in community activities. 14.7% of students who use illicit drugs say they seldom take part in community activities SOURCE: 2005 PRIDE Survey- Cherokee County)

Early Care and

Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Child Care Assistance for Working parents

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify and pursue funding for child care assistance
- Increase public awareness of the learning potential of children ages 0-5
- Establish a composite of all services available in Cherokee County for children ages 0-5

Parental Awareness of needs of Children ages 0-5

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify parent training that is available to parents in Cherokee County
- Increase intra-agency networking to share resources and information
- Identify incentives to motivate parents to participate in parenting classes

Economic Security

- **Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.**

Family Resource Center

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assist with writing grants and seeking funding and in-kind matches to fund resource center
- Work with community leaders to determine funding opportunities for Executive Director position
- Work with community leaders to determine availability of a facility to be used for the resource center at no or low-cost until the center is established

Economic Development

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce and local business leaders to stimulate business growth and job creation in Cherokee County
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce and local business leaders to bring self-sustaining, long-term economic and community development to Cherokee County
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce and local business leaders in the marketing of green space for tourism and residential development

Parent Involvement

and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Parental Involvement

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work with local child advocacy agencies to offer parenting classes that educates parents about the importance of parental involvement in their child's education
- Coordinate efforts between the local school system and businesses offering

possible incentives for parents to attend community workshops about various social issues.

- Coordinate efforts with local media to advertise upcoming parental involvement events/seminars as well as the importance of parental involvement

Parenting Skills

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Educate local human service organizations, law enforcement officials and judges about the available parenting programs for potential referrals
- Work with local agencies currently providing parenting classes to bring community awareness to the need for parenting skills and availability of parenting classes
- Contact local radio stations about free "parenting tips" public service announcements that would air during travel time to and from job destinations
- Distribute parenting skills information to local businesses

Parental Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work with local agencies to offer free or low-cost childcare for parents enrolled in school, taking GED classes, or attending job training
- Bring community awareness to the available opportunities for families that struggle with literacy
- Bring community awareness to job training opportunities available

Policy Recommendation

1. The State of Alabama to offer incentives to dentists willing to live and practice in rural areas of Alabama. These incentives could include tax credit, school loan repayment, etc.
2. The State of Alabama to increase mental health services in each county.
3. The State of Alabama to increase funding for childcare assistance
4. The State of Alabama to increase funding for schools.
5. The State of Alabama to increase available funding to enhance current services.

Accomplishments

1. Arranged to have Evette Williams, Director of Thirteenth Place, Inc.; Kerri Peterson, Coordinator for Alabama Teen Court; Alice Yeager, Technical Assistant with the Office of School Readiness; Brandon Lackey, Director of Development for Alabama Teen Challenge; and Sue Jones, Director of the FOCUS Program to address our Council and community about what services they have available to Cherokee County and what services we can establish from our community through them.
2. Researched and requested free publications that we received and then made available to individuals and families through distribution sites throughout Cherokee County. Distribution sites included businesses, state agencies, hospitals/medical centers, restaurants, schools, day cares, and recreation centers. The free publications cover topics such as money management; helping your child with reading, math, homework, etc.; preparing and caring for child; a guide to installing child safety seats; environmental citizenship; buying a home; health insurance; a parent's guide to prevention; financing college; child abuse; fire safety; the truth about tobacco, meth, alcohol, HIV AIDS, steroids, inhalants, and marijuana; child proofing your home; ADD/ADHD; facts about prescription drug abuse; how to be debt free; selecting quality day care; what a parent should expect from their child through the different stages of the child's life; etc.
3. Put together 200 free Parent/Family Kits that were distributed to individuals and families at Wal-Mart and to kids attending the So-Cool Camp. These kits included most of the publication listed above and toothbrushes, water bottles, key chains, and pencils. The Alabama Army National Guard donated bags, pencils, key chains, and water bottles. ALL Kids donated bags and toothbrushes. Cherokee County Extension Office donated 4H bags. The Cherokee County Health Department donated WIC bags.
4. Researched and requested free information on Child Abuse and Neglect. A CD and manual on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect were distributed to all day care providers and teachers in

Cherokee County.

5. Worked with the Cherokee County Board of Education to apply for funding that would support after school and summer programs in Cherokee County Schools.
6. Applied for funding from the Alabama Unified Prevention System that if awarded would fund the establishment of a Family Resource Center in Cherokee County.
7. Applied for free books from The Lisa Libraries Organization that if awarded will be used in the "Motherhead" Program conducted by the Cherokee County McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program.
8. Applied for \$5,760 from Alabama Power Company that if awarded will be used to continue the progress of the Cherokee County Children's Policy Council as it applies to the CCCPC mission Statement.

Additional Cherokee County Children's Policy Council Members:

Nell Oliver

Tom Oliver

Linda Prater

Megan Puckett

Ryan Rainer

Joan Rivard

Wade Rooks

Tersa Sauls

Tim Sauls

Jeff Shaver

Mary Shewmaker

Anne Shumaker

Rosa Statom

Michael Terrell

Steve Walden

Kyle Wilson

Larry Wilson